element of the overall bilateral relationship of the two countries and all efforts will be made to enhance and deepen this cooperation. It was also agreed that the ongoing dialogue on defence, politico-military and security issues between the Ministries of Defence of India and France would be continued in a systematic and regular manner through the Indo-French High Committee on Defence Cooperation already in existence.

(b) No, Sir.

AIDS among Defence personnel

2336. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATl VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Army's Directorate General of Medical Services has brought out a handbook on AIDS;

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to prevent spread of AIDS amongst Defence personnel; and

(c) the expenditure incurred on AIDS control during 1996-97, 1997-98 and the allocation for 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) A book titled as "Commanders' hand book on AIDS" has been prepared by Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and the same was mass produced by Directorate General of Medical Services (Army).

The following steps are being taken to prevent the spread of AIDS among Defence personnel:—

(a) IEC (Information, Education and Communication synonymous with Health Education) activities on prevention and control of HIV/AIDS have been stepped up in the Armed Forces. These IEC activities are undertaken by medical, nursing and paramedical staff and also by commanders at all levels and religious teachers. A video film was developed by the Armed Forces Medical College, highlighting the causes and prevention of HIV/AIDS in the Armed Forces Personnel and has been distributed to all Units in the Army.

(b) Only HIV infection free Blood is used for transfusion to service personnel and their families.

(c) Condoms are made available freely in the units for service personnel.

(d) Service personnel found sero positive for HIV are examined frequently and preventive measures are being taken against the spread of infection.

The expenditure on the control of HIV/AIDS is met from the consolidated Budgetary provision made available to the Armed Forces Medical Services for providing comprehensive health care facilities to service personnel and their families. In addition, following grant in aid for surveillance of HIV/AIDS have been provided by National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Year	Amount (in Rs.)
1996-97	Nil
1997-98	15,24,500.00
1998-99	13,61,000.00

Representation of the Chiefs of Staffs Committee

2337. SHRI JIBON ROY:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minister of Defence had received a representation from the Chiefs of Staffs Committee stating the difficulties the Committee was facing because of the role of the then Defence Secretary, after having failed to meet him for the preceding four days;

(b) if so, the reasons for the failure of the Defence Minister to meet the Service Chiefs for four days; and

(c) the response of Government to the contents of the representation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A representation was received. However, at no time has the access of the three Chiefs of the Staff to the Defence Minister been restricted or curtailed in any way even during the days

immediately preceding representation from the Chiefs of Staffs Committee. Apart from the regular weekly meetings and monthly Defence Minister's Committee meetings, the Chiefs of Staff always were accorded easy access.

(c) In terms of content, the Chiefs of Staff subjective perception about the personnel attitude was expressed but did not dwell on any concrete matter. Its contents were noted by Government.

Petition of Dy. Chief of Naval Staff

2338. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a petition filed by the recently appointed Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, he contended before the Calcutta High Court that there was a communal bias on the part of the then Chief of Naval Staff, in displaying inimical attitude towards him; and

(b) if so, the response of Government to such allegation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The recently appointed Deputy Chief of Naval Staff had filed a Writ Petition before the Calcutta High court for redressal of his grievances, inter-alia, for his appointment as Principal Staff Officer and expunction of adverse remarks endorsed by the former CNS. The officer had submitted two representations to NHQ, running to about 150 pages. In one of the representations the officer had made passing remarks on a denominational matter. The two representations, submitted by the officer which dealt with a number of issues of a substantive nature, form part of the Writ Petition filed before the Calcutta High Court.

On the directions of the Calcutta High Court, the Government had considered the statutory representations submitted by the officer after obtaining detailed comments from the Naval HQrs and granted him redress by way of expunging the adverse remarks endorsed by the former CNS. A show cause notice issued by the NHQ seeking explanation of the officer was also disposed of by the Government on the directions of the Calcutta High Court and the show cause closed. The Writ Petition is still pending before the High Court.

Relationship between civilian authorities and armed forces

2339. SHRI SITARAM KESRI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to restructure the working relationship between the civilian authorities and the armed forces; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Some proposals having a bearing on the organisation of Ministry of Defence are being examined in the Government.

Revamping MES

2340. CHAUDHARY CHUNNI LAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether MES is an inter-service organisation, directly under the Ministry of Defence;

(b) whether it is a fact that Pay Commission recommended MES to be completely civil organisation and to install civilian officer as Head of the Department, as a first step; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for delay in its acceptance with the present strength of civilian officers/staff in MES, which is understood to be exceeding 90%?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The MES is a composite organisation where both military and civilians work.

(b) and (c) Even though, such recommendations have been made by the Pay Commission, the Army HQrs have expressed a different view on the issue. Further, keeping the mixed nature of the organisation in view, any decision taken must ensure that the interests of both Civilian Officers as well as the interest of the Military Officers are considered.